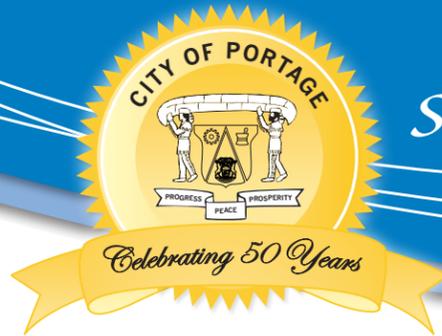




7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
www.portagemi.gov



City Embarking on Comprehensive Plan Update Share Your Ideas and Help Chart a Course for the Future of Portage

The City of Portage Planning Commission, with assistance from LSL Planning, Inc. and the City Administration, will embark upon a process to update the City of Portage Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides future decision-making related to land use, community development and capital improvements (streets, utilities and municipal buildings). A community-supported Comprehensive Plan helps ensure that decisions made on matters of growth and development will maintain and enhance the community.

A "kick-off" open house will be held in Portage City Hall Council Chambers (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) on Wednesday, October 2, 2013 from 4 to 7 p.m. The purpose of the open house is to gather initial public comments about current and future growth and development patterns in the

city. Interested residents are encouraged to visit anytime during the open house to browse interactive stations, view preliminary concepts, ask questions and provide input on what matters most about the future of Portage. Representatives from LSL Planning will also provide brief presentations at 4 p.m. and again at 6 p.m. during the open house.

Recognizing that individual schedules may not allow attendance at the October 2, 2013 Open House, other methods for citizens to participate, comment and remain informed will include the following:

- ◆ A Comprehensive Plan web page has been established at www.portagemi.gov. The web page, which can be accessed by clicking on the Comprehensive Plan icon, will provide timely information regarding the update process, meeting schedules, draft documents and a

venue to submit online comments.

- ◆ Interested residents may attend any of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings, which are held on the first and third Thursday each month.
- ◆ Written comments can also be submitted via the web page or by U.S. mail or in person to the Department of Community Development at 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002. Normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Residents, property owners, business owners and other interested citizens are encouraged to participate in charting the course for the future of Portage. Public participation is important to ensure the success of the Comprehensive Plan update process. For more information, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.



City Accepting Nominations for 2013 Outstanding Customer Service Award

Have you received superior customer service from a City of Portage employee? Do you have frequent interaction with a City of Portage employee who consistently delivers outstanding customer service? If so, the City of Portage would like to hear from you!

You can nominate a City of Portage employee for the annual Outstanding Customer Service Award. To be selected, an employee must deliver superior customer service on a consistent basis. Superior customer service can be demonstrated in a number of ways. The manner in which an employee converses with a customer, the delivery of accurate and complete information and exceeding customer expectations are examples. The award can also be given to an employee based, in part, on a one-time event that is very unique, complicated or significant.

Nominations can be made at www.portagemi.gov by clicking on the Customer Service icon or by calling 329-4533 to request a nomination form. Nominations are due by October 3, 2013. The recipient of the Outstanding Customer Service Award will be selected by the City Manager and up to three employees may be selected for honorable mention. The award(s) will be announced in November 2013.

Be a Property Steward Inspect and Clean Street Gutters and Drainage Grates



Quick, intense rainstorms can cause water ponding on streets and clogged storm drainage grates are a major cause of stormwater ponding during rain storms. The Department of Transportation & Utilities requests the assistance of residents by inspecting and cleaning street gutters and storm drainage grates abutting their property on a regular basis.

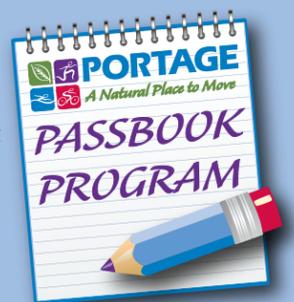
- ◆ Don't blow grass clippings, leaves or debris into the street. When it rains, storm water carries these materials down the gutter to the nearest drainage grate, often clogging the grate.
- ◆ Periodically inspect grates abutting your property and remove accumulated debris. Major maintenance needs can be reported to the Transportation & Utilities Department at 329-4422.
- ◆ Never pour used motor oil, chemicals or foreign substances into drainage grates or street gutters.
- ◆ Never use a street drainage basin as a "garbage collector" or for pet wastes.

These simple preventative actions will help to keep the storm water system functioning at a maximum level and minimize storm water ponding in the street and potentially onto private property.

Celebrate 50 Years of Business in the City of Portage!

The City of Portage Passbook Program is part of the city's 50th anniversary celebration and encourages connections between residents and businesses within the city. Residents can visit participating businesses to collect stamps from two businesses in each of three categories (retail, service and restaurant) and be entered to win a free gift from a participating Portage business.

Visit www.portagemi.gov/Passbook.aspx (or from the home page, click on the Passbook Program icon) to download and print a Passbook. Gifts, donated by participating businesses, will be awarded monthly, so complete your Passbook and mail or deliver it to the Department of Community Development at City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002). Completed Passbooks must be received by the last business day of the month. No purchase is necessary to validate your Passbook.



Portage businesses may volunteer to participate in the program, and/or donate goods or services. The names of participating businesses will be listed on the printable Passbook. All Portage businesses are encouraged to participate! Visit the Passbook page on the city website for program details and registration instructions.

This program is not intended to and does not endorse or promote the services or products of any participating business. Any business located in the City of Portage is eligible to become a participating business. All gifts are donated by participating businesses and not the City of Portage. The awarding business is fully responsible for the gift and the city has made no representation or warranties concerning the nature, quality or value of any gift. The city reserves the right to make changes to this program without notice.

Home Owner and Home Buyer Programs Maintain and Improve Neighborhood Quality of Life



The City of Portage continues to offer long standing Housing Programs. The programs provide assistance for Portage home owners to complete housing improvements and to Kalamazoo County home buyers seeking to purchase a home in specified Portage neighborhoods. Funding is readily available to provide assistance to income-eligible households through the following programs:

Housing Rehabilitation Program: Up to \$15,000 per housing unit is available in the form of a no-interest or 3% interest deferred loan for home improvements and repairs. Eligible improvements include roofing, furnace, foundation, electrical work, plumbing work, water and sewer hook-ups, termite treatment, accessibility improvements and other interior and/or exterior repairs necessary to address housing code deficiencies.

Emergency Repair Grant Program: Up to \$1,000 to complete household repairs that pose an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of the residents.

Home Buyer Down Payment Assistance Program: Up to \$3,000 toward down payment and closing costs in the form of a no-interest deferred loan to eligible home buyers who purchase and occupy a home located within specified neighborhoods. As an additional incentive, up to \$5,000 will be provided to home buyers who purchase and occupy a vacant foreclosed home within an eligible area, or a vacant home that was previously renter-occupied.

To participate in the Home Buyer Down Payment Assistance Program, a minimum household income of half the maximum amount noted in the table to the right is also required. For more detailed information, or for an application package, please call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

Household Size	Maximum Income
1 Person	\$34,900
2 Person	\$39,900
3 Person	\$44,900
4 Person	\$49,850
5 Person	\$53,850
6 Person	\$57,850
7 Person	\$61,850
8 Person	\$65,850

Eligibility for all programs is based on maximum income limits established annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as provided above.

Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Reminder

The next Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection will begin October 7, 2013. **No bagged materials will be collected during the October Brush Pickup.** Residents are asked to place brush at the curbside by 7 a.m. on the Monday of the designated week; however not more than, 72 hours prior to the designated Monday. The map (right) indicates the week designated for collection in each zone.

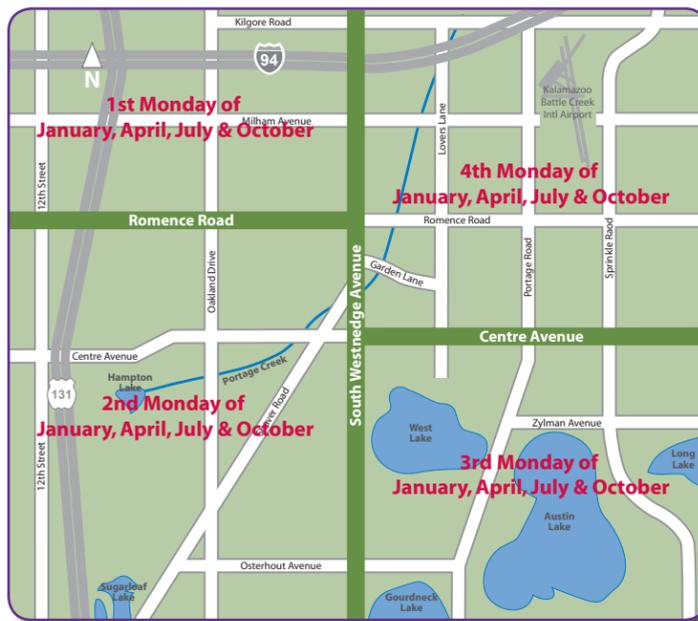
How should I prepare my brush?

- ◆ Brush and branches may be any length (4 feet or longer preferred).
- ◆ Branches must be less than 3 inches in diameter.
- ◆ Please stack brush and branches in neat piles at curbside by 7 a.m. on the designated Monday; each zone will be cleared of materials by the end of the designated week.

What will not be collected?

- ◆ Brush and branches generated from the removal of a tree with a trunk greater than four inches in diameter at its base. **No part of a "whole tree removal" will be collected.**
- ◆ Brush and branches in excess of three inches in diameter.
- ◆ Brush and branches generated from a professional tree removal service.
- ◆ Firewood, lumber, timber, building materials or railroad ties.
- ◆ Roots or tree stumps.
- ◆ Yew branches or vines.
- ◆ Grass clippings, flowers, weeds or garden materials.
- ◆ Loose leaves and ornamental grasses.
- ◆ Items placed at curbside after 7 a.m. on Monday of the designated week.

Residents are reminded that a small amount of debris may remain at the curb following brush collection and are asked to assist with the final cleanup. Questions about the Quarterly Brush Pickup Program can be directed to the Parks, Recreation & Public Services Department 329-4444 or visit www.portagemi.gov.



2013 Summer Adult Softball Program a Success!

The Parks & Recreation Division thanks all 2013 summer adult softball program participants for a great season! With 123 teams and over 1,800 participants in the regular season – 32 of those teams competing in the City Tournament – the City of Portage is proud to serve the community with this popular recreation program. Leagues offered include Co-Ed, Men's, Over 50 and Doubleheader. Additional thanks go out to the many local businesses that sponsored the majority of these teams.

The 2013 softball season resulted in some challenges due to field renovations, which were expected to have minimal impact on the season. Due to weather conditions and slow grass growth, however, two fields were out of service for the season. These two fields are now looking better than ever and will be ready for play well before the next season begins. The cooperation by league teams and players was greatly appreciated while field assignments and play times were adjusted to accommodate the much needed field improvements.

Congratulations to 2013 League and Tournament Champions! To view a list of these teams, visit www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Parks & Recreation > Adult Softball. The significant commitment that all participating teams contribute to the adult softball program is recognized. Watch for more improvements to the program, beginning in 2014:

- ◆ Online team and player registration.
- ◆ Credit card payment acceptance.
- ◆ Improved scheduling tools.
- ◆ Re-paving of South Westnedge Park upper ball diamond parking lot.

The late summer adult softball program is currently underway with 38 participating teams. Best of luck to those new and returning teams!

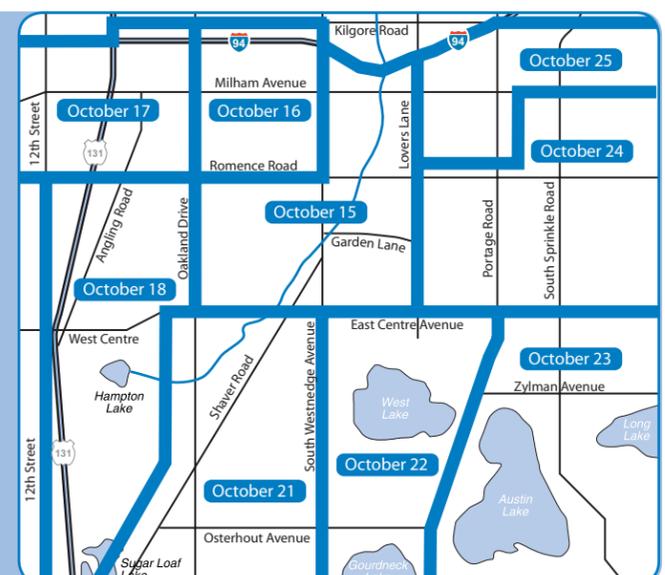
Fall Hydrant Flushing Schedule

The City of Portage utility contractor, United Water, will conduct fire hydrant flushing from Tuesday, October 15 through Friday, October 25. The map (right) indicates the dates hydrant flushing will take place in each area of the city. Most hydrants will be flushed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. so as to avoid high-traffic periods.

Hydrant flushing accomplishes important objectives for the water system, including improving water quality by removing sediment that accumulates in the water system between flushings and providing the opportunity to test proper operation of the fire hydrants and the water pumping system.

Some water discoloration will occur during the flushing process and residents are encouraged to check for discoloration prior to using water for laundry or cleaning. Even though water may be somewhat discolored, it is safe to drink.

During the flushing process, large quantities of water are discharged from the hydrants. Motorists are urged to watch for vehicles and workers engaged in this work and reduce speeds accordingly. Please call the Department of Transportation and Utilities with any questions or concerns at 324-9235.



2013 Neighborhood Fall Leaf Pickup Schedule

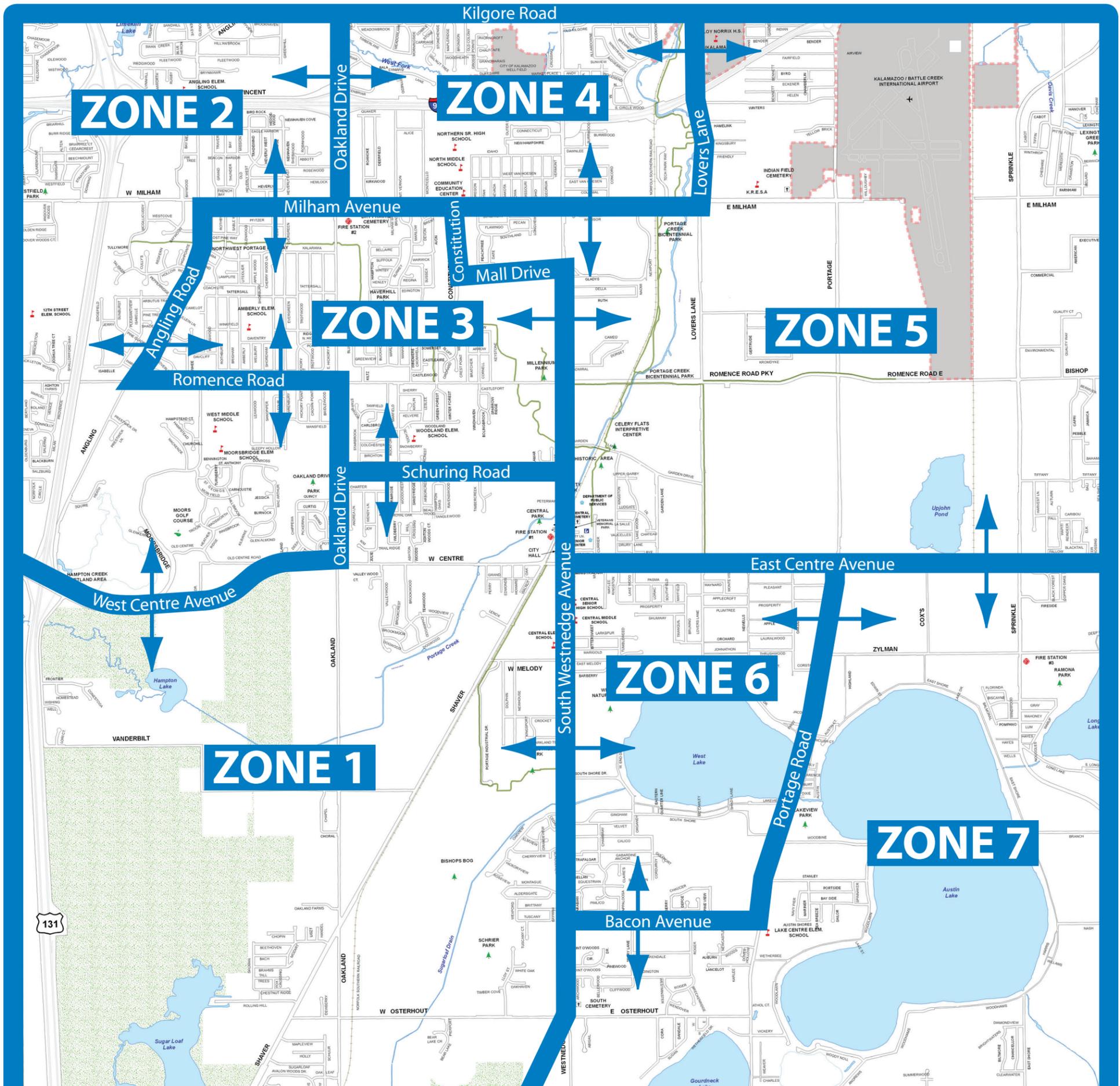
October 28 through December 5, 2013

Please review these program requirements carefully and save this information for future reference. Information is also available on the city website at www.portagemi.gov – click on the fall leaf pickup icon.

ONLY loose leaves or leaves bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags will be collected.

- ◆ Leaf collection will occur three times in each neighborhood zone until prohibited by weather. Residents are asked to place leaves at the curb by 7 a.m. on each of the three collection dates shown to the right.
- ◆ For public safety, do not put leaves in the street more than three days prior to your scheduled collection.
- ◆ Leaves should be raked off the grass and into the street or bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags and placed next to the curb as close to the street edge as possible so as to not obstruct traffic. Equipment may damage lawns if leaves are left in grass areas or ditches.
- ◆ The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is **separate** from the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program (see page 2 for details). Please ensure that brush and leaf piles are placed in separate locations at the curb.
- ◆ Leaves in plastic bags (including biodegradable plastic bags) **will not** be collected.
- ◆ Streets will be swept following each neighborhood collection, weather permitting.
- ◆ Leaf collection is **not** performed on private streets or for commercial establishments, churches or schools. The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is only provided at residential properties on public streets.
- ◆ The Portage Code of Ordinances (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2) prohibits residents from having basketball stands in the city right-of-way. Likewise, during trash and recycling removal days, citizens are requested to keep their containers on the curb versus on the actual roadway. These items impede safe leaf collection operations and can result in damage to city equipment and personal property.
- ◆ If weather prohibits raking of leaves, the city offers a spring bagged leaf pickup in April 2014, along with the scheduled brush pickup.

Zone	1st Collection	2nd Collection	3rd Collection
1	Monday, October 28	Monday, November 11	Monday, November 25
2	Tuesday, October 29	Tuesday, November 12	Tuesday, November 26
3	Wednesday, October 30	Wednesday, November 13	Wednesday, November 27
4	Thursday, October 31	Thursday, November 14	Monday, December 2
5	Friday, November 1	Friday, November 15	Tuesday, December 3
6	Monday, November 4	Monday, November 18	Wednesday, December 4
7	Tuesday, November 5	Tuesday, November 19	Thursday, December 5



Burning of leaves and brush is banned in the City of Portage! There is NO burn period. Questions? Call the Department of Parks, Recreation and Public Services at 329-4444 or go online at www.portagemi.gov.

Changes in Voting Precinct Locations for November 5 City General Election

The City of Portage General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2013. Polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Local issues on the ballot include the two-year Mayoral term and three, four-year City Council terms.

The City of Portage and Portage Public Schools (PPS) have a long history of collaboration in support of the electoral process, with most voting precincts located in public school buildings. The city and PPS continue to work together for the benefit of residents of the City of Portage and the safety of PPS students. In an effort to boost school safety, alternate locations have been identified to move voting precincts

away from locations where students are present. As part of the relocation process, a number of voting precinct locations that are not in PPS buildings are also being relocated. The following voting precinct locations will be relocated effective with the November 5, 2013 General Election:

- ◆ Portage Community Education Center
- ◆ Lake Center Elementary
- ◆ Amberly Elementary
- ◆ Haverhill Elementary
- ◆ Angling Road Elementary
- ◆ Woodland Elementary
- ◆ North Middle School
- ◆ Moorsbridge Elementary
- ◆ Victory Baptist Church
- ◆ Milham Meadows Community Room
- ◆ Portage United Church of Christ

Voting precincts formerly located at Central Middle School and Central Elementary were previously relocated.

In order to inform voters of the planned precinct changes, new voter identification cards will be mailed to the affected voters in early October. The mailing will include an explanation of the changes, along with a map directing voters to the new voting precinct location. Voters may also visit www.michigan.gov/vote to find their voting precinct location. Questions concerning the November 5, 2013 General Election or voting precinct location changes can be directed to the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511.

Volunteer on a City Board or Commission

Do you have some great ideas? Can you give a few hours each month to your community? The City Council relies on volunteers for a variety of services and periodically asks the Council Boards and Commissions to review programs developed by the City Administration and make recommendations. The Council will interview applicants for the following Boards and Commissions on Tuesday, October 8, 2013, beginning at 5:15 p.m.

- ◆ Human Services Board
- ◆ Park Board
- ◆ Senior Citizens Advisory Board
- ◆ Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting times and responsibilities of each Board and Commission vary. Additional information and applications to serve can be obtained by visiting the city website at www.portagemi.gov > *Boards & Commissions* or by contacting the Office of the City Clerk at 329-4412. Citizens interested in serving on a Board must be registered voters of the City of Portage and should submit their applications by September 20, 2013.

- ◆ Economic Development Corporation/ Tax Increment Finance Authority/ Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- ◆ Environmental Board
- ◆ Historic District Commission

Summer Property Tax Payments Due September 16, 2013

Summer property tax bill payments are due by 5 p.m. on September 16, 2013. Property owners who did not receive a summer tax bill can view the information at www.portagemi.gov > *Quick Links* > *Property Information*.

Property tax payments can be made at City Hall, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (with the exception of Labor Day on September 2, 2013) in the form of cash, check or money order. To pay by credit card, call 1-800-272-9829 and follow the instructions printed on the front of the tax bill. A convenience fee of 3 percent of the amount being paid by credit card is charged by the vendor (Official Payments).

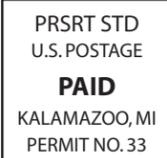
All tax payments received or postmarked

after September 16, 2013 will be charged a 3 percent late fee on the outstanding amount. To avoid the late fee, mailed payments must be postmarked on or before September 16, 2013 and received by the Treasury Office before September 23, 2013. Property owners choosing to mail payment on September 16 are encouraged to visually confirm the postmark by the Post Office. The Treasury Office will rely on the postmark in all late-payment disputes. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2014 will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

Questions regarding tax bills may be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at 269-329-4455.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160



ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER



City Closings

Non-emergency city offices will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Labor Day

Monday, September 2

Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 28 and
Friday, November 29

The next edition of the *Portager* will be published in December 2013.

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. and are open to the public.

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns or complaints about city services by calling Complaint Resolution at (269) 329-4404 or by visiting www.portagemi.gov > Report It!



Mayor Peter J. Strazdas
327-4478
peter.strazdas@portagemi.gov



Mayor Pro Tem Claudette Reid
491-9725
claudette.reid@portagemi.gov



Jim Pearson
327-9136
jimpearson4@gmail.com



Patricia M. Randall
324-7779
patricia.randall@portagemi.gov



Ed Sackley
323-8119
edsackley@msn.com



Terry R. Urban
323-8160
terry.urban@portagemi.gov



Vacancy

City Manager:
Maurice S. Evans
evansm@portagemi.gov

Portager Editor:
Mary Beth Block
blockm@portagemi.gov

Televised City Meetings

All City of Portage City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 98. AT&T U-Verse customers can access the City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.

September

5	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
9	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
10	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
19	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
24	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting

October

3	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
8	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
14	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
17	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
24	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting

November

5	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
7	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
11	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
19	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
21	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting